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Georgia's Only Refinery to Replace Russian Crude With Turkmen, Kazakh Oil

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The Kulevi oil terminal on the Black Sea coast near Poti, Georgia. **Wikimedia**

Georgia's only oil refinery plans to replace Russian crude with supplies from Central Asian producers Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, the CEO of its operating company said Monday.

The strategic shift comes nearly a month after the Kulevi oil terminal on the Black Sea coast narrowly avoided being added to an EU list of sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

"Our task is to completely replace existing Russian crude," David Potskhveria, the CEO of Black Sea Petroleum, which operates the Kulevi refinery, told Georgian media.

"We are working first with Turkmen oil, and in the next stage, we plan to use Kazakh and other alternative sources," Potskhveria said.

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The CEO said that diversifying crude sources would allow it to export refined oil to new markets, including the European Union.

Potskhveria did not say when the transition would take place, but noted that the start of Turkmen oil transit via Azerbaijan's railway network posed an "unexpected" challenge.

"We reached an agreement for Turkmen crude several months ago, but its transportation has been postponed," he said.

Kulevi, with the initial production capacity of 1.2 million tons of crude oil per year, is owned and operated by Azerbaijan's state-owned oil company Socar.

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